Interview with Gifford D. Malone

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

GIFFORD D. MALONE

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: December 5, 1991

[Note: This transcript was not edited by Mr. Malone]

Q: Today is December 5, 1991. This is an interview with Gifford D. Malone concerning his Foreign Service Career. Giff, I wonder if you could give me a little bit about your background...where you were born, grew up, educated, etc.?

MALONE: I was born in Richmond, Virginia. I was the son of a professor who was a Southerner.

Q: You might explain who he was because he was well known.

MALONE: He was Dumas Malone who became a fairly eminent historian in the United States in American History.

Q: A major league biographer of Thomas Jefferson.

MALONE: Yes. He was from the South. My mother was an New Englander. When I was fairly small we moved to Massachusetts because my father was at Harvard then. Although I still consider myself a Virginian, I don't talk like a Virginian and that is the reason because

my most formative years were spent in Massachusetts and later in my high school years in New York. I went on to Princeton University and majored in history.

Q: When did you graduate?

MALONE: I graduated in 1951. Then I went to Columbia University where they had a two-year program in what was then called the Russian Institute and is now called the Harriman Institute. I completed that and then spent three years in the Army which was normal in those days.

Q: Where were you stationed?

MALONE: Much to my regret I stayed entirely in the United States. I think from the Army's point of view that made sense because one of the things they did was to send me to a year of Russian language training at the Army Language School in Monterey, California.

Q: I am also an alumnus of that Institution.

MALONE: After that they sent me here to Washington and I worked in intelligence in the Soviet field. While I was here in Washington I took the Foreign Service exam in 1955, which was the first time they gave what was called the new exam, it was only one day as opposed to three days.

Q: I took it in 1954 and it was three and a half days.

MALONE: In any case that was when I took it and eventually took the orals while I was still in the Army. They asked me then when I could come in and I said that I really would like to go back and do some more graduate work and then come in. They said that was all right. So I had a couple of more years at Columbia partly doing advanced studies in International Relations and International Law, and also working as an assistant to the then Director of the Russian Institute. Then I came into the Foreign Service in 1958.

Q: I wonder if you could talk a bit about this Russian Institute because it is rather important in the field? What was the atmosphere there, what were you looking at?

MALONE: That is an interesting question. The Russian Institute in those days was probably one of the two major Russian Studies programs in the United States, the other one being at Harvard. The faculty at the Russian Institute were all people who had spent time in the Soviet Union in the 1930s mainly. They were all, and I think it was much to the advantage of the Russian Institute, people who had spent some time in government which in those days was natural because the war had intervened and they were doing various kinds of things. So it was a group that was not overly academic in its outlook. They were all well-known professors, but they were also people who had served in the practical world of government. I felt and have always felt since then that that was very important.

How did they look at the Soviet Union? I don't know if you can generalize. The Soviet Union was a fairly unpleasant place in those days. I don't think most of them had any illusions about it. Time has now shown that some of them were wrong about various things.

Abram Bergsten was the economist there. He eventually went back to Harvard and did some of the most important studies ever done in those days on Soviet national income, etc. We now understand, many years later, his estimates were probably greatly exaggerated. But people were mistaken about things like that.

But I think by and large the faculty was quite realistic about the Soviet Union. I certainly felt that I came out of it with a fairly realistic understanding of what...

Q: Who were the students who were going in? What were they looking towards for the future?

MALONE: It was an interesting group. I probably was the youngest person there, just fresh out of college. There weren't very many fresh out of college. Some of them were

considerably older and had had a good deal of experience in Soviet Affairs. One of them had been a correspondent in Moscow. Several others seemed to have had a lot of personal experience with things Russian and Soviet. I think a lot of them were going into academic life. Some of the younger ones, such as myself, were not. There were, at that time, as there were for a number of years, two or three Army officers studying there for a year, which was part of the Army program, which I later became involved in when I went out to Oberammergau as a Foreign Service officer. But I don't really know. I think I could say that the majority of them were not going into government.

Q: Was the feeling that the study of the Soviet Union was going to open opportunities or was this basically knowing your enemy?

MALONE: It was more knowing your enemy than anything else. Americans, and I think this applied to American universities too at that time, really knew remarkably little about the Soviet Union. As I said there were only two major study centers in the United States at that time. So there was an awful lot to learn. Kremlinology was in its infancy then. People were doing that. I don't think it was related to people thinking there were opportunities opening up.

I chose to be in it also because of the know your enemy standpoint. Originally when I went to Columbia I enrolled in the School of International Affairs and when you are in this School you had to choose a geographical area in which to concentrate. In 1951 the obvious area seemed to be the Soviet Union. I think that was probably right. There just weren't a lot of people in the United States who really knew very much else.

Q: So you came into the Foreign Service in 1958?

MALONE: I came in in 1958, but let me backtrack a moment. I almost didn't come in in 1958. Early that year the United States and the Soviet Union signed an agreement, then known as the Lacey-Zarubin Agreement, for exchanges between the two countries. So they were looking for people to go as exchange students to Moscow. I was persuaded by

my professors to apply for that. I did apply and was accepted. There was a certain amount of to-ing and fro-ing with the State Department, with the Personnel people saying to me, “We can't let you do that because if you want to come into the Foreign Service you are going to have to do it now.” And people on the Soviet Desk saying, “No, this would be a good opportunity for him and he could come in if he wanted to.” In any case it was settled that way but then they wouldn't give my wife a visa, and I had made that a condition of my...

Q: The Soviets would not give your wife a visa?

MALONE: They would not. So, when it became clear they would not I came on down to Washington and into the Foreign Service.

Q: You spent your first couple of years, from 1958-61, in Intelligence Research.

MALONE: Yes, I did. After the Department had trained me for three months in French.

Q: Why that?

MALONE: Well, because they said, “You have Russian but you don't have a world language.” I had studied French in college. So they trained me in French for three or four months and then I was assigned to INR and began reading Pravda, Red Star, Izvestia, and doing research on the Soviet Union.

Q: What was your impression about the state of the intelligence community in the State Department and the Soviet Union at the time? What were the tools you used and what was the attitude?

MALONE: The tools we used as intelligence research was always mainly published sources. Of course we had access to what CIA was producing, at least some of it. We had reporting from Moscow and all that, but we were all reading the Soviet press and it was a kind of Kremlinology. Those things all combined into the ultimate product. INR was a

good deal bigger in those days than it is now, and the number of people engaged in Soviet Affairs in INR were more numerous than later was the case.

They were trying in those days, and I think with good reason, to assign some people to the Soviet section who had just come back from Moscow to give a fresh slant on things. I think it was a pretty good group and I had the impression that in those days INR was doing pretty well. Later, due partly to budgetary reasons, and partly because the Department decided it was unnecessary, it considerably reduced the size of INR all together, including the Soviet section.

Q: What was the interplay with the Desk?

MALONE: There was a fair amount of interplay then, although it is a little hard to compare. I later served on the Desk and at that stage we had a great deal of interplay with INR. We talked with them every day. It may have been a little less when I was serving there myself, although I am not sure of that. My general impression was that there was a good deal of communication. In other words, what we were doing was relevant to what they were doing and they wanted to know what we were thinking and how we analyzed things.

Q: To give a feel for this. Okay you are reading Pravda, Izvestia, etc. and looking at the various reports coming out, what sort of things would you do that would be of use to American foreign policy at that time?

MALONE: Basically what I was doing, remember I was at the most junior level, was producing written reports about various subjects. I was in military affairs so I read among other things the military press. A lot of it was keeping track of who was in charge of what and producing very factual reports of that sort. I wouldn't say, at least what I was doing, could be called deep, deep think pieces. There was some of that that went on in INR. INR contributed to the National Intelligence Estimates, and met with CIA people when these things were being put together. But it was mostly very factual stuff.

Q: What was your feel when you got together with your CIA colleagues on this? Were they looking at it in a different way? And also the military?

MALONE: Let me say first, I didn't get together with CIA colleagues very often. The only times that I remember was when you were trying to get an agreed position on a National Intelligence Estimate concerning the Soviet Union. In those days CIA would have a draft, INR would have a draft and we would try to produce something on which everyone could agree. I don't want to suggest that there were any dramatic disagreements, there weren't. But I was just looking at a small slice of it.

Q: What was the National Intelligence Estimate?

MALONE: The National Intelligence Estimate was a broad government wide estimate, in this case about the Soviet Union...there were sections to these estimates and then there were updates and revisions. It was an effort to achieve a government wide view on what was happening in the Soviet Union. There has been a lot of talk in later years about disagreements within the government on these things. I didn't sense that in those days, remember this is the late 1950s, that there was a lot of that. If there was it certainly didn't come to my attention. But people would have been talking about it had there been. Later, I think, there were some fairly serious disagreements. I know certainly later in my career I became aware that there tended always to be disagreements between the CIA and often joined by State on the one hand, and Defense Intelligence Agency on the other. But that wasn't evident to me in these early days.

Q: To put this in context, we are talking 1991, in the last year or so we have seen essentially the end of the Cold War and complete disintegration of the Soviet Union. We don't even know what to call it today, except the ex-Soviet Union. At that time when you were in INR, how did it look to the United States? Was it a threat? How did we feel about it?

MALONE: We looked upon it as a threat, which I think was an accurate view. We looked upon it as a country that was very hard to get information about. After all it was a closed society. We tried to understand to what degree there was dissent in the Soviet Union. We were not very successful at that, although from time to time you would get some inkling of a labor unrest here or there, that sort of thing. Basically we were just trying to understand this very different society, this very controlled society, which we all felt quite sincerely was a threat to the United States and the West in general.

Q: Then you went to Warsaw rather than the Soviet Union where you served from 1961-63. How did this come about?

MALONE: Well, I was very junior and I filled out what in those days was called the April Fool's sheet on which you would list your preferences for assignments. I put the Soviet Union first but you had to put down other places so I put Eastern Europe in general. Actually I considered myself quite lucky to come within the ball park and to go to Warsaw.

The way it happened was that in Warsaw, for a number of years, the Polish authorities had prevented immigration to the United States. There were 40,000 people on the waiting list at the Embassy. About this time, within some months of the time I went there, the Polish government had finally relented and said people could again immigrate to the United States. Well, this created an immediate need for visa officers. So I went out as an immigrant visa officer, an addition body in the visa line. I went there with hardly any warning. I said that I would like to get some Polish but they claimed there was no time for that. They felt since I had Russian I would pick it up very fast. I think they were overly optimistic.

Q: Yes, because the differences between the two languages are considerable.

MALONE: So I had to learn my Polish in Poland. The Consular Section was a good place to do that.

Q: What was the spirit of the Embassy at that time? Kennedy had just become President. It looked like a new era was coming.

MALONE: We had a sort of feeling that President Kennedy was very popular among the Polish people. First of all because he was an American President and Poland even in the worst days of Communism was a very pro-American country. I am not talking about the authorities, but everyone else. Kennedy was new, young and had a good image which carried through even there. I remember sitting in my little office in the consular office where we had a picture of President Kennedy on the wall and a visa applicant came in and she said, “You look like the President.” Now this was intended to flatter me, of course. But it showed you that the Poles were very aware of Kennedy.

Q: I was in Yugoslavia about the same time and sometimes I would have people come in and kiss the picture of the President which interfered with the flow of work.

MALONE: I had one visa applicant...as you know from your own experience and you get all kinds and we process a tremendous number...the name of one woman, who I had seen waiting out in the lobby for a long time, finally came up and she came in for an interview. She said to me, “I talked to President Kennedy last night.” I said, “Well, that is very interesting, how did you do that?” She said, “Oh, I have ways of doing it.” I said, “Well, what did the President say to you?” She said, “He told me you were going to give me a visa today.” Playing along I said, “Well, I haven't been in touch with the President today, but your name will have to go on the list along with everyone else.”

Q: Were you a visa officer the entire time?

MALONE: No I wasn't. I was a visa officer for a year and a half. I had a two and half year assignment to Warsaw. One day they told me that they were going to move me to the Economic Section, that being a two person section. This was fine, but I said that I didn't know much about economics. I had taken a course with Prof. Bergsten on Soviet

economics. By that time we had a new Ambassador. The previous Ambassador had been Jake Beam. The new Ambassador was John Cabot, who was definitely a man from the old school. I remember saying to him, “Well, you know I am very pleased to be going into the Economic Section next week, but you know I don't know very much about economics.” He said, “That is all right just give it the old college try.”

Q: This is how the old school treated economics anyway.

MALONE: I think so. But I learned a lot very quickly because there were only two of us. John Davis, who was also about to move in, had been the chief of the Consular Section. I moved in by myself first and spent about two or three months solo trying to figure out what was going on and then John arrived. I learned a great deal about economics very quickly.

Q: Back to the visa operation. What were the major problems working with Polish immigrants in Poland?

MALONE: There was the usual problem of whether a person, which I didn't have to face but the non-immigrant visa officers had to face, was bona fide non-immigrant. If they got to me they were presumed to be a bona fide immigrant, but then you had to determine what their means of support in the United States would be. They all seemed to have cousins in the United States, which was mostly true because there is a tremendous number of people with Polish background living here.

Another problem that you had to deal with was those who had been members of the Communist Party or Communist student groups or in certain occupations which would have excluded them under the law. I had to turn down a certain number. I am sure there were some that had been and did not reveal that and therefore got visas.

In some cases it was pretty clear that the law was very unfair. I remember once I had an applicant who had been barred because he had had a position in the student organization at the university which really had nothing to do with politics at all. I had to go through a

long procedure of writing an advisory opinion to send into the Visa Office in Washington explaining why I thought, notwithstanding what the law said, this person was clearly eligible. I succeeded in that case in getting him in. But those kinds of things were...

Q: In the economics side, what were our interests?

MALONE: Our function in the Economic Section was twofold, (1) to report to Washington on what was happening in the Polish economy and (2) to deal with commercial matters, such as they were. There were really very few of those. We would have an American businessman occasionally coming through who usually knew nothing about Poland at all but was looking for business opportunities. We would talk to them and refer them to the people we knew in the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Occasionally something would develop, but rarely.

But otherwise we tried to keep track of Polish exports to the United States and the state of the Polish economy, etc. Poland was a very poor country then. There wasn't much encouraging one could report.

Q: For some reason the only thing I can think of is Polish ham.

MALONE: Well, Polish hams were a major export to the United States, in fact hams were the largest export to the United States in those days. They produced a good ham and it was a canned ham and they were able to export them. There were no problems in getting them in. Unfortunately they no longer export Polish hams to the United States.

Q: How about dealing with Polish authorities, particularly Ministry of Trade? Were you able to get over there? Were they forthcoming?

MALONE: I thought at the time it was sort of a struggle, but I discovered when I later turned up in Moscow that the Poles were really much more forthcoming than the Russians. They were friendly, but very controlled. They didn't have much latitude. But I had the

feeling, even then in those days in Poland, that most of the officials I were dealing with were favorably disposed to the United States, but, of course, the policy of their government was not. I didn't know as many officials then as I did when I went back to Poland in later years.

On the other hand, the controls on citizens as far as having anything to do with foreigners was concerned were reasonably tight. Again, I discovered later they were much looser than the case in the Soviet Union. People certainly thought twice before they came to your apartment for a meal, a drink, or something. Later I discovered that some people had gotten in trouble for doing that.

Q: What was the attitude from the Embassy's point of view towards Poland as being a member of the Warsaw Pact and potentially an opponent to our NATO and all that? Did one see them as being a firm supporter of the Soviets or were their cracks?

MALONE: There weren't really very many cracks evident at that time in the official position in the Polish government. It was perfectly evident that the population was pro-American. The rhetoric of the government was anti-American for the most part. The press, of course, was controlled. The Trybuna Ludu, the Party paper, never had anything nice to say about the United States. I think the attitude of the people in the Embassy, which has been consistent over the years, was that Poland is a country which basically is very pro-American. It is a terrible thing that has happened to them. They wouldn't be in this state if it weren't for the Soviet Union.

Basically the policy at that time and later was to try to open things up and engage them if one could. Now at that time there was very little that could be done because of the attitude of the Polish government. That was the Gomulka period and it was not a period when they were making any effort to be friendly to the United States.

Q: Just to give a feel to the thing, at receptions, etc. did you get a little pleasure out of saying that wasn't it wonderful, their firm admiration for the wonderful Russians and all this, for obviously the Poles didn't like the Russians?

MALONE: And they didn't often talk about it. Even the top officials tended not to talk about the Russians. No, I didn't twit them about that very often, but it was perfectly clear that no Pole basically liked them. In those days they had all the trappings that you would expect in a country like that. There was a Polish-Soviet Friendship Society that occupied a big building, which I visited a couple of times just to see what was going on and there was basically nothing going on. They had a huge Soviet Embassy. The Poles were constantly reminded of the Soviet Union by the great building that the Soviets had put up in the middle of Warsaw, which was known as the Palace of Culture. It was a huge, ugly building which I used to call Stalin-esque in style because it was similar to some of the things you would see in Moscow. That was a visible reminder. There were a lot of political jokes in those days and a great many of them were about the Russians.

Q: Do you remember any of them?

MALONE: I remember one that was often told about the Palace of Culture. The Russians built the Palace as a gift from the Soviet people. Two Russians met who were working on the Palace of Culture. The first one says to the other, “Well, what's your name?” He says, “My name is Ivan.” The other man says, “Well, that is interesting because my name is Ivan too. How do you write it?” So the other fellow very laboriously makes an X on a piece of paper and says, “How do you write yours?” The other man makes an X with a little squiggle beside it. The man says, “Oh, that is interesting, what does that mean?” He says, “That means engineer.” That was a typical Polish joke about the Russians...barbarians, uneducated, etc.

Q: Did you have the feeling that there were people in the Soviet Embassy that were pulling all the levers and calling all the major shots?

MALONE: We just didn't know. You didn't see a lot of the Soviets around. I saw more of them in my second tour years later. We assumed that and we now know in fact that was the case. The Soviets kept to themselves publicly, but obviously they were in constant contact with the highest Polish officials.

After the revolution in 1989, one of the things that came to light was all kinds of direct telephone lines from the Soviet Embassy to various high officials. We hadn't known that previously, but we assumed there was contact.

Q: What was life like in Poland for an American? I am thinking both about the security problems, spy problems and just general life.

MALONE: Let me touch on general life first. Poland was a very poor country then. We at the American Embassy tended to have better quarters than the average Pole might have. My family and I lived in a two-bedroom apartment in Warsaw, in an old pre-war building that had been reconstructed after the war. In terms of what you could buy in the way of food, it was pretty slim pickings. In the winter there were no vegetables except root vegetables, potatoes, beets, cabbage and that was about it. The State stores were stocked with food but again there was no assortment. There was a peasant market centrally located in Warsaw where we and most people we knew would shop for vegetables when they came in season. There was always more to be had there than in the State stores. But basically it was very poor.

I remember one time my wife and I were down in one of the State stores and there was a huge line. She went up to see what was being sold and it turned out to be pineapples. So I got in line. As I got closer I asked her to go up to see what the price was. She gave me a zloty equivalent of about $9.00. I said that was just too much to pay for a pineapple and got out of the line. But that gives you an idea of how things were run. Once in a while there would be some oranges imported from Israel.

On the security side we faced what American Foreign Service people faced in any one of those Communist-controlled countries. There was pretty stringent security control. I would say a good deal less than in the Soviet Union, but nevertheless, you were aware that it was going on. I know that one person who came to my apartment was in trouble with the police for months, perhaps years, after that. We always recognized that there were these people keeping watch on us.

Then you had that impression in terms of how the Poles lived. After all the press was controlled. They listened to Voice of America and Radio Free Europe...I suspect the majority listened. It wasn't jammed in Poland. You combine that with the fact that the ordinary citizens all hated the government, this was evident in the atmosphere even though people didn't come out and say that. One felt a certain constraint and a certain amount of tension.

Occasionally there would be incidents. The Polish secret police were very active. For example, we were building a new Embassy at that time. The Embassy we were then occupying was a building that had been an old inn back in the 18th century in the old town. The old Embassy had been razed and a new modern structure was being built. We had a special marine guard detachment in addition to the regular one, whose job was to watch over all these Polish laborers.

We had a technical security man from the Department as the building progressed whose job it was to watch this thing closely. I remember shortly before I left Warsaw sitting in the car with him one day, saying to him, “How do you know they are not putting microphones in there.” He said, “You don't have to worry, we are watching it very closely.” Well, he was wrong. When the building was finally finished, some years later they found it was riddled with microphones. So the secret police were very active.

Q: There was quite a famous incident while you were on board wasn't there?

MALONE: The Scarbeck case. Doc Scarbeck was the General Services Officer at the Embassy when I arrived. Of course we all knew him. We knew his wife who was a very nice lady. He had been very nice to us as brand new junior newcomers in helping us to get set up, etc. We didn't know, of course, any of this stuff that was going on.

One day my wife and I were sitting in our kitchen having breakfast listening to the Voice of America. The announcer said, “An American Foreign Service officer had been arrested.” I remember thinking to myself, “I wonder if that is anyone I know?” It was Scarbeck. It was the first time I ever saw my wife's jaw literally drop. We looked at each other. He had done a lot of foolish things and been entrapped in a rather classic way by the secret police. They claimed they would do terrible things to this woman with whom he had become involved if he didn't give them materials, so he did give them some stuff.

Q: How did this, to have something like this in the family, particularly in the enclosed community, how did this affect...?

MALONE: Everyone was shocked. They were horrified that anyone would do a thing like this. Naturally there was a lot of sympathy for Scarbeck's wife. He had two little children. She was a German woman. I think we were all totally surprised. But at the same time it was a lesson that these people, the secret police, are active and doing things and what our own security people were telling us was true. Here was an example.

Q: Did you ever have the feeling that you were targeted at any time?

MALONE: I never did, no. And it would have been very foolish if they had targeted me, the most junior of all officers. Sometimes they would follow you. I can remember driving elsewhere in Poland and sometimes having a car follow me through a town or something like that. One of the giveaways was that they all used Mercedes. They would sit out in a big square which was near this old Embassy all day long. What they were watching we wouldn't know. I had one colleague who took great delight in going out and standing in the

middle of the square with a note pad and pencil taking down their tag numbers and then they would all speed off in different directions. There was a certain amount of amateurish quality to it.

Q: You had two professional Ambassadors, Jake Beam and John Cabot. Obviously you were a very junior officer but what was your impression of how these two operated?

MALONE: Jake Beam was a man who knew something about Eastern Europe having served in the Soviet Union and had a lot of background. John Cabot had spent much of his career in Latin America and before he arrived and Jake Beam had left, we wondered how a man with that kind of background could be very good in Poland. But actually he was very good. He was a very professional man. He was very good with the staff. He gave you a lot of encouragement. He didn't claim to know a lot about Poland and he relied on us to tell him about the country.

Shortly after he arrived I had gone into the Economic Section so in that capacity I would sit in on the daily staff meetings with him. So I had a lot more chance to observe him close up than I did Jake Beam. But both of them were professional men and I think each was a very good ambassador.

Q: Then you went for more Russian training, even though you had a lot of previous study. Why was that?

MALONE: I applied to go to Oberammergau, what was then called Detachment R to which the State Department normally sent two or three people. I applied really to insure my ticket to Moscow. I felt if they accepted me for Oberammergau, then I would automatically go, and that proved to be the case. As a matter of fact when I got there I found that being back in the Russian language was very helpful because my Russian had sort of gotten all mixed up with Polish by that time. Just linguistically it was very useful.

The school was actually a very useful experience. It was not primarily a language school. We had, I think, only one hour a day of language instruction. You were suppose to know Russian by the time you got there. It was an area study program taught by #migr#s from the Soviet Union. So all the classes were in Russian and we wrote our exams in Russian. Although not all the subjects were particularly well taught, you certainly got a very different slant than you would have gotten from an American professor, for example.

One striking example of that was in the field of Soviet law. They had a course at Oberammergau taught by a Russian who had been on Prosecutor Vishinsky's staff.

Q: This would be the great trials of the military during the late 1930s.

MALONE: This guy had been on his staff when Vishinsky was Prosecutor General of the USSR (I forget his exact title). I had previously taken a course on Soviet law with Professor John Hazard of Columbia University and I can tell you that the viewpoint of this man at Oberammergau about Soviet law was very different than that of John Hassard. It certainly gave me insights. This man's view was totally cynical but I learned a great deal about the subject in a very different way.

We had a couple of people on the faculty who had been military intelligence officers. Some of the courses were purely on military subjects and most of us from the State Department didn't take those. But it was a good course. Another very good thing about it was it included a trip to the Soviet Union. About a week after I arrived in the summer of 1963 for that course, we departed on a trip in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union by bus from Oberammergau. We went first to Poland which didn't interest me particularly, but then on by bus into the Soviet Union and driving essentially the same route that Napoleon had taken all the way to Moscow, stopping at Smolensk, Minsk and other places. We spent a month in the Soviet Union traveling around all over the place. It was really a very useful experience.

Q: I am surprised the Soviets let you do it.

MALONE: It was an on again, off again thing. Some years they allowed the group to come, some years they didn't. We, of course, speculated about this and concluded that the reason they did was because they felt they would get a lot of biographic intelligence about us by listening to us. And they probably did. But I think the trade-off was well worth it because it was a wonderful introduction to visit many parts of the Soviet Union and to be speaking Russian and to see what the place where I was going to be serving was really like.

So the next year when I went to the Soviet Union I was speaking Russian well by this time and all this background of actually having been there, I was really able to hit the ground running.

Q: You were there from 1964-66. What were you doing initially when you went to the Soviet Union?

MALONE: In those days the policy at the Embassy was to take people of my grade, by then I was FSO-5, and try to give them different kinds of experiences. That normally meant a tour one year in one part of the Embassy and for a year in another part. My first year was spent as assistant administrator. I was the American member of the Administrative staff who spoke Russian. The rest didn't ...the GSO, the Admin Officer, etc.

One of the most important parts of that job was being liaison with the various elements of the Soviet bureaucracy with whom we dealt. Customs, the large organization that serviced the diplomatic corps...all of that was controlled and centralized in the Soviet Union. They had an organization that was subordinate to the Foreign Ministry, whose job it was to take care of all administrative needs of the diplomatic corps. It was partly designed to enable the various foreign embassies in Moscow to get things done because if they had to do it on their own they never would have managed it. And it was also an element of control.

We couldn't rent an apartment without going through that organization. We couldn't hire a chauffeur, we couldn't do anything.

As it turned out it was a wonderful practical experience for me because I would go over there practically every day negotiating with them on one thing or another all in Russian. It gave me an insight into Soviet life that I never would have gotten if I had been in any other job.

Q: I was just thinking that if you looked at the political job which is supposed to be the glamour job, you really don't have that type of contact at all.

MALONE: I had constant contact, daily contact. I didn't realize at the time how valuable it was. It was only later that I really understood that. I knew it was valuable linguistically because I had to speak Russian all the time, but beyond that it really gave me a knowledge of Soviet society that I just wouldn't have gotten. One of the things that I discovered later in negotiating with the Soviets about various things was that they behaved exactly the same way at the higher diplomatic level as they had when I was negotiating for a chauffeur, or to get an apartment remodeled.

Q: What was the Soviet negotiating style that you found at this time?

MALONE: Very hard bargaining requiring on one's part great patience. If they were going to come around they would do so at the end of the process. Also recognizing what kind of country you represented made an enormous difference. We represented a great power and there was no question that therefore we got more out of the Soviets in the administrative field then let us say some poor African ambassador who didn't have any leverage at all. We had leverage. We didn't have as much then as the State Department developed in later years when they developed some kind of an apparatus to take care of the diplomatic corps, making it difficult for the Soviets to do some of the things they had normally done in our own free society.

I found, too, that you could also deal with them as people. If there wasn't some kind of political impediment, they could be reasonably decent and carry on as though everything was really okay. I also discovered that they were shameless liars. I think it was just a different attitude towards truth. I found that even at the level I dealt with they wouldn't hesitate to tell the most outrageous lies, which they knew I understood was a lie, but was part of the whole process. It is very hard to articulate all the ways in which it helped one understand the Soviets, but it clearly did.

Q: What was your impression of the Embassy? This was at the height of the Cold War with a little bit of thawing with the Khrushchev period...he was about to go or had gone by that time.

MALONE: Khrushchev? Yes, I was there when he left.

Q: We will cover that in a minute. But how did you find the Embassy? This was the period when our Embassy in Moscow was still considered the first team. Did you feel that?

MALONE: I felt it was very professional. The Ambassador, who was Foy Kohler when I was there was very good. Most of the people on the staff were people who knew something about Soviet affairs. All the more senior people had been there before. The percentage of Americans who spoke the language was very high. Yes, I felt it was a very competent group. There was very high morale. We all felt we were doing something important being there. I had very positive feelings about it.

Q: What was your impression of Foy Kohler?

MALONE: My impression of him was of a very practical, sensible man who was down to earth, understood the Russians pretty well, and was easy to deal with. I would say just thoroughly competent. He had a good team. Walter Stoessel was his DCM. Mac Toon was his Political Counselor. All these people were good.

Q: Did you find there were security problems the same as in Poland?

MALONE: Much more so. You lived a very controlled life. You knew that they were listening in to you. Sometimes it was very crude. One day in the apartment that we lived in, an apartment house almost exclusively lived in by foreigners, some one went up into the attic which for some reason was unlocked. There were all these tape machines going.

Another time my wife had the experience, which happened once or twice to other people, of talking on the phone and then picking it up to make another call and hearing her conversation being played back. So you knew perfectly well that they were listening to you all of the time. If you really wanted to say something to one's own family that you didn't want the Russians to hear you would go out and take a walk or write a note. We were careful at the Embassy too as to where we said what. But it was needed.

The controls were very evident every time you traveled. I couldn't go into a railroad station and buy a ticket. They would spot me as a foreigner right away and they wouldn't sell me one. You could only go through the Intourist organization. So all of that was controlled. Various parts of the Soviet Union, of course, were closed. I mean large parts really, but that still left a lot we could go to. But then the supposedly open areas were sometimes closed for temporary reasons. You couldn't go beyond 25 kilometers of Moscow without submitting a Note to the Foreign Ministry saying that you intended to travel to Leningrad, let's say. If they didn't respond within two days you assumed that was all right. Of course they also had control over you because your tickets were purchased through a central organization. But sometimes they would declare Leningrad, for example, temporally closed. Particularly if a Naval Attach# wanted to go up there at a particular time and look around the dock. This sort of thing happened. Sometimes you could go some place only by air but not by train, or vice versa. There were always restrictions.

I think everyone had occasions when they knew somebody was trying to set them up...some KGB operative. We knew a number of Soviet citizens and we would have them

to our apartment for meals, but you never could be sure whether they were KGB or not. There were some that you were quite sure were and some we were quite sure were not. And then there was a sort of middle element that you never knew. But even there it was all controlled.

A number of people we knew were writers, translators, etc. The only way to get them to come...you could invite them but you would also have to send them an invitation through the Writers Union. The Writers Union had in it a foreign desk which, of course, was manned by the KGB and they would tell these people whether they could go or not. So even on that level things were controlled.

Q: Did you find that dealing with the Embassy's local Soviet staff that you could get a feel for the society?

MALONE: Yes, there too.

Q: I am speaking about my experience in Yugoslavia. One could say that they are all spying on you, but on the other hand in the day to day working with them you often get something that you wouldn't get if it were an all American staff.

MALONE: That is right. Because I was in the Administrative Section my first year, I dealt with the local staff all the time. The local clerical people, the mechanics, the laborers, chauffeurs. Yes, I think I developed very good relations with most of them. There were a couple of incidents in which you became particularly aware of the pressures they were under.

I remember one chauffeur suddenly didn't come to work any more. This would happen from time to time. A couple of months later I saw him out back in the courtyard. He was driving for another diplomatic mission. I said, “I see you are driving for them.” He said, “I wanted to work for you but they told me I couldn't anymore.” I don't remember his exact words, but it was clear that he wasn't giving them enough information.

And there were other local employees that from time to time would tell me things like that. They had divided loyalties. They basically liked working for the Americans. They liked Americans, I think...most of them did. We liked them. But they were under control and surely would not have been able to work there if they were not willing to report on various things that were going on. It was a strange relationship.

Q: How did the coup against Khrushchev play out in the Embassy when he was kicked out?

MALONE: One of the amusing things about it was...of course nobody foresaw it at all. There was a local journalist by the name of Victor Louis who lived in Moscow. He was the alleged correspondent for a London newspaper but of Russian background and was regarded by everyone as being a KGB agent. He used to feed people information from time to time. I suppose to establish his own credentials. He came by one day and told the Administrative Officer that Khrushchev was out. Now this is a very odd person to tell this to. The Administrative Officer moments later said to me, “Khrushchev is out.” I asked how he knew that and he said that Victor Louis told him. He went upstairs and told Mac Toon, who was the Political Counselor. Mac said, “That is nonsense, nonsense!” But of course within a few hours we knew that Khrushchev had been removed.

It was interesting to be there when that happened because there was no visible sign at all. All the pictures came down, of course. But if you went out and mingled with the crowds, etc., nobody was talking about it. They were probably thinking about it, but visibly it was as though it had happened on the moon. Here was one of the most important people in the world suddenly gone and nobody was talking about it.

One of my colleagues went out the following day to one of the local magazine bookstores which they had all around the city and where pictures of leaders were always on sale. He asked about a picture of Nikita Sergeyevich and the woman said, “No, and there won't be any.”

Of course it was actually a very important event and over time it became evident that there would be changes because Khrushchev was gone, but that wasn't immediately evident then.

Q: Were there any "popular" manifestations of hostilities towards the United States during this time?

MALONE: Yes. This was during the Vietnam War. We had a couple of demonstrations at the American Embassy that were connected with that. Petitions would come in as well. They were all organized, of course. We were under instructions to receive the petitions in the Consular Section, so people who were bringing petitions against the United States with respect to the Vietnam War were directed there. Of course, these tended to come in batches. Once there would be lots of petitions and then months and months would go by and there would be nothing.

One of my friends who was in the Consular Section, he was head of the section, was receiving these petitions and he said to one of these bearers of these petitions one day, "You know it is interesting that they all seem to come at the same time." And the Russian said, "We are an organized people."

We had three major demonstrations against the American Embassy, which, of course, are organized by local authorities. One of them had to do with Africa and I forget what touched that off. It was African students there. The police would be obviously alerted before these things happened and would start setting up blockades and the mounted police would come in.

The first such demonstration was not as well organized by the Soviets as the later two and there was a great deal of breaking of windows for which ultimately they paid for after months of negotiations.

Another one was by the Chinese in Moscow primarily. There were, let's say, 3,000 Chinese students studying in Moscow then and they organized a demonstration against the American Embassy for which the Soviets were very well prepared. They not only had the mounted police, but this was in the winter and the streets are very broad in Moscow and the street on which the American Embassy is located is probably eight or ten lanes wide. The Soviets had put in front of the Embassy, bumper to bumper, city trucks used to haul snow away to create a barrier. The demonstrators were supposed to go down the other side of that barrier from the Embassy. But in this case the demonstration got out of hand and the people poured over the trucks and were throwing things, of course, at Embassy windows. Some with slingshots were firing ball bearings and fighting with the police, as it turned out. The Chinese and the Russians didn't like each other very much. That was quite a melee.

But there were these kinds of things and constant criticism about the Vietnam War.

On the other hand, that didn't seem to have any particular effect on the other relationships that were going on. The Soviets were always able to keep these things in compartments. It did affect me personally. For example, I would have to go in and start negotiating with the authorities about getting all these windows prepared. But the tone was just the same as it always had been. They claimed that they had no responsibility and that we had to understand that these people were all fired up, etc.There was an ambivalence there.

Q: You were reporting on the Soviet economy. Later this became a tremendous bone of contention in the last year that we thought the Soviets had a much better economy and greater strength than it turned out was true. The economy was the real Achilles' heel in the Soviet system. At that time how did you see it and how did you report it?

MALONE: We were all mislead. I think all Americans were mislead about the strength of the economy. To put it another way, we didn't realize what a fragile system it was. It seemed to be highly controlled with things under control. At the time I was there, there

was a lot of talk about economic reform. That is what we were particularly following. There were some fairly prominent Soviet economists who were writing articles in the economic journals about this. It was an effort to make the economy a little more decentralized and to try to introduce very modified market principles into the economy. And as this happened, there was a government commission working on it. There was some expectation that they might do something reasonably radical. Not restore private property or anything like that.

The man who was associated with this was the Prime Minister, Kosygin. It was in his name that the reforms were finally reported out. They were considerably watered down over what some of these, I supposed you could call liberal economists had been advocating, but nevertheless seemed to amount to some kind of change in the economy. But it was very soon after that that Kosygin, himself, lost authority and actually none of the reforms ever amounted to anything. But we were caught up in it because it was going on and we were reporting on it and trying to understand.

Q: You mentioned being caught up in it and I just wonder, you go to Europe which had gone through a devastating war and yet 20 odd years after the war the place is booming and then you go to Eastern Europe and immediately you are in another world where everything was hard. For the American or any other observer to say that it was just different there and not really look and say, “God if they can't deliver food and the stuff is shoddy and all this, what is going on?”

MALONE: Obviously their was an ambivalence in our own thinking about it. It is true we were aware of all of these shortages, of the very primitive nature of the economy compared to the United States. No question about that. I think where we perhaps overestimated was perhaps on the military side. We felt they were better than they were...I am not sure of that, but we may have. Although we didn't realize they were devoting even quite as large a percentage of GNP to the military as we now know they did, we knew it was huge. We knew in certain elements of the scientific field they were devoting resources and as observers on the scene we knew that they were a talented people and if they

chose in this huge unwieldy economy to focus their efforts on certain key things like the military and science—putting up a sputnik or whatever—that they could do it.

But at the same time you couldn't help but see in comparison with any Western country that the standard of living was low; that consumer goods were very poor; that people had to wait two, three, four years on a waiting list to get a car, which wouldn't be very good when they finally did get it; that the road system was very poorly developed; that Aeroflot, although covering a large area and maintaining a large network, was pretty primitive by Western standards...traveling by Aeroflot was not fun.

So all of these things came in to you and you tried to put it all together and I think where we all sort of came out was...Yes, in some respects this is some kind of a third country, but it is immensely strong in certain key areas and somehow they are making this command economy do the kind of job we see being done in terms of what was being produced, etc. I don't think many of us thought there was a great deal of room for improvement in this system. We were interested in the economic reforms because it was going on, but I don't think any of us thought that if this actually takes place it is going to make a radical difference, and clearly it didn't.

Of course you were also struck by the enormous difference in the Soviet Union between what was available in Moscow, which was a favored city, and what was available in smaller places. That is one of the reasons that the Embassy made a great point having people get out and travel to see how it was out in the provinces because it was very different in many cases. Now you have a situation in the Soviet Union where people from Moscow are going out to the small places to buy things because they can't get them in Moscow.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the Communist Party hierarchy was really somewhat removed from the regular people?

MALONE: Yes, as far as we knew. One of the things that the hierarchy was pretty good at was sort of hiding its privileges. Everybody knew that they, the people meant the rulers, lived better than the other people, etc. But they didn't flaunt it. There were special stores that were never seen by the ordinary Soviet citizen. The ordinary Soviet citizen would see the big black limousines racing down the middle of the street in Moscow, but they never got to see the dachas that these people had outside. I think although they knew that these people must live pretty well, they didn't realize how different it was.

We got a little taste of it because we as diplomats were favored to the extent that we could go to the one foreign currency store for foreigners where there were things available for hard currency that were not available to the ordinary citizen. But we could not tell to what extent the rulers were separated psychologically...did or did not understand what ordinary people were thinking. There was no way of doing that.

Q: Okay, we will close now and pick up next time on your return from Washington.

Today is March 6, 1992 and this is a continuation of an interview with Gifford D. Malone. Giff we finished the period you were in Moscow from 1964-66. So let's start there. You then came back to Washington to the State Department where you worked from 1966-71. Were you on the Soviet Desk?

MALONE: I worked from 1966-69 on the Soviet Desk. Then I worked in the Operations Center for two years.

Q: Why don't we talk about the Soviet Desk. This was in the height of the Cold War. What was the Soviet Desk?

MALONE: The Soviet Desk was in the Office of Soviet Union Affairs in the Bureau of European Affairs. It was, I think, the largest office in the Bureau at that time. I can't remember how many people we had, but we were divided into three sections—Bilateral Relations, Multilateral Relations and Economics. I worked in the Bilateral Relations section

where all of the five or six officers were concerned with our relations with the Soviet Union on specific matters. We had our duties and portfolios divided up.

Q: Who was in charge in the Department of overall Soviet Affairs?

MALONE: Well, in those days, the Department didn't have as many layers as it does now, and far fewer Deputy Assistant Secretaries. In the Bureau of European Affairs you had two Deputy Assistant Secretaries, one of whom was responsible for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. That was Walter Stoessel. At the time I came into SOV, which is what the Soviet Desk was called, Mac Toon was the Country Director. He was in charge of the Office of Soviet Union Affairs. In those days you did not have a lot of people concerning themselves with Soviet policy above the Bureau. In other words, when Mac Toon wanted to talk with the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, who was Foy Kohler, about Soviet Affairs, he simply called him on the phone. As a matter of fact I would say the person in the Department of State at that time who was primarily responsible for Soviet affairs and probably played the most important role was the Country Director, Mac Toon. That wouldn't be true today and hasn't been true for a good many years.

Q: In this period of 1966-69, from your vantage point in Washington what were the most consuming elements of the American-Soviet relationship?

MALONE: Well, you recall it was a period not long after Khrushchev had been put aside by his colleagues in the Kremlin and Brezhnev had come in. It was a time when the Soviet leadership was consolidating its position. It was the period of the Vietnam War so that was a point of major discord between the Soviets and the United States. Although it was not as serious a point of discord as you might have thought by reading the Soviet press. In other words, Pravda and Izvestia were filled with denunciations of the United States every day, but normal diplomatic relations went on. I wouldn't say that US-Soviet relations were particularly damaged by that, but it was always there in the background.

What we were trying to do really was to sort of continue to try to open things up a little in the Soviet Union. For example, during the period I was in SOV we were negotiating a consular agreement with the Soviets. We didn't have a consular agreement. That took a lot of doing. Negotiations with the Soviets always take a lot of time, but setting some rules for what happens to Americans who are tossed in jail in the Soviet Union, etc. was felt to be a first step. We regarded it as something useful and important.

Interestingly enough, it is hard to believe it these days, there was a lot of opposition in the United States to signing that treaty or any treaty with the Soviet Union. I used to go out on speaking tours quite a lot in those days and people would say, “How can you sign a treaty with the Soviets? How can you trust them?” I would say, “Well, you can't always trust them, but in this case you have an agreement where there are obligations on both sides and if one side doesn't live up to it, the other side knows it instantly and can do something about it or take retaliatory actions.” So that was something that we would do.

Q: Did you as a professional who had served in the Soviet Union have any concern on your part that by our pounding the drums of anti-Sovietness and all, that we may have been impeding our ability to deal with this superpower because we had painted everything so black that it was difficult to convince the elements of the American public that we could deal with these people?

MALONE: I don't think so. Some of that may be true. It is very hard obviously for people who are not professional diplomats and not thinking about foreign affairs to recognize that you can deal with an unfriendly country which really is a threat to you. It is possible at the same time to have more or less normal diplomatic relations in some other ways.

Some of the feeling on the part of the public is due to what you suggest. But by and large the Soviet record had been so terrible from the end of the Second World War on that it was simply hard for people to understand how you could also go ahead and sign these agreements with them. In that sense, although I don't think you could accuse a single

person in SOV of being a dove, we probably seemed to some of these people in the American community as being soft on the Soviets.

One group that would not have agreed with that at that time were a lot of the Vietnam War protesters who...it was sort of an automatic carryover from their opposition to the war...began to think that the North Koreans and North Vietnamese are okay...hard to believe but they said that...and therefore everything we have been told about the Soviets is too. So it was really the beginning of the revisionist history in the United States starting with very young people...

Q: You were getting it really from the hardline right and from what we call the more extreme left.

MALONE: We were but not so much as later. That was just in its infancy. But we were trying to follow a reasonable course. I think anyone who has ever served in Moscow would agree that if you did not [insudible] that is why Americans had travel restrictions and that sort of thing. And when one of our people would not be able to travel to some city that had been declared open, as frequently happened in the Soviet Union, we would automatically bar some Soviet diplomat here from going some place. And, of course, the American public found that ridiculous and hard to understand.

The Soviet Embassy played that for all it was worth. Let's say a university in an area that we had closed in retaliation for areas they had closed would invite some member of the Soviet Embassy to come and speak. He would agree to come and at the last minute call up and say that he couldn't come because the State Department wouldn't let him. That was hard to beat.

But while we were doing that we were conducting negotiations with the Soviets on other kinds of treaties. Obviously there were some kind of arms discussions going on.

I was involved, for example, in civil aviation. We had no civil aviation agreement with the Soviet Union. Therefore we had no direct flights between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Q: Did you find that you spent a lot of time working on the Soviet form of negotiating, which I am told is holding on very long and hard and sort of giving their concessions at the last minute, whereas the American way is to sort of make concession along the way? Both come out about the same, but did you find the two styles didn't mesh and it was a problem?

MALONE: We in SOV understood the Soviets pretty well. Most of us there had experience in Moscow. Some of the more senior people had served there a couple of times. We understood this about the Soviets. It really wasn't for us a problem. It was a problem for some of the other people in the State Department who had not previously negotiated with the Soviets. That was one of the reasons why whenever negotiations went on with another agency there would be someone there from SOV advising the American negotiator how to deal with these people. It wasn't very difficult, they caught on very quickly.

Q: What was the basic advise you would give?

MALONE: The basic advise was that the Soviets would hang tough, would start out with an extreme position which they didn't expect to have accepted, that you have to be firm all the way through and if there are going to be many concessions made they tend to be made at such a point when the Soviets are totally convinced that they are not going to get anything unless they give.

Now, obviously, the way that takes place varies with the subject matter. To give you an example, fisheries. In those days, we held negotiations with the Soviets on Atlantic fisheries. We did not have a 200 mile fishing zone in those days as we have now. We had a 3 mile territorial limit. The Soviets would come right up to nearly that limit in their

great fleet of fishing vessels and factory ships. They would take enormous quantities of fish. It was already clear that the stocks were going down. Well, of course, we would have these negotiations because the Soviets wanted concessions too. They realized by bargaining they might get something, they might be better off too. But the first step would be the United States saying this is what is happening to the fishing stocks. The Soviets would deny that any such thing was happening to the fishing stocks. So you would have to get over that hurdle first and that would take quite a while. Those negotiations always ended more or less favorably for both sides, because they were perfectly straight forward practical kinds of things that had literally nothing to do with ideology. Talking about fish is fairly basic.

Q: How about the consular agreement?

MALONE: The consular agreement was eventually signed. That was more difficult on the American side because you not only had to convince Americans and therefore members of Congress, you had to convince J. Edgar Hoover, Chief of the FBI, who testified before Congress that what we proposed would make his job much more difficult. But those things were eventually settled and the consular agreement was signed and as far as I know since that date has been mostly adhered to.

Q: You were there on the Soviet Desk during the last years of the Johnson Administration.

MALONE: That is right.

Q: Where you there when the Nixon Administration came in or had you moved to the Secretariat?

MALONE: Let's see.

Q: He came in in 1969.

MALONE: I was there at the very beginning of the Nixon Administration, but I moved to the Secretariat in the spring of 1969. I was involved at the end of the Johnson Administration in helping to write the history of the foreign policy of the Johnson Administration. After Lyndon Johnson decided he would leave, that he would not seek another term, he decided to have the history of the Johnson Administration produced in every Department. So the State Department organized itself for that. A small group was formed in the Department in which I became, for three months or so, one of the three editors. I produced first the history of the Johnson Administration in Soviet Relations and they decided that that was a good piece of work and they would promote me. So I took time off for about three months from SOV to do that.

Q: How did you feel about an exercise like this? Were you pretty much conscious that this was almost a political exercise or did you feel that this was an honest attempt on the part of the principals who were looking at this to make an addition to history?

MALONE: Well, I felt as far as the State Department product was concern that it was an honest attempt. I was never aware of any political pressure to make things look good or anything of that sort. That may or may not have been true in other Departments, I don't know. As far as I am aware there was never any effort on the Department to change anything that anybody had written that didn't quite conform. Basically these histories were not revelations. They were, I suppose you could say, more or less official histories. This is what happened in US foreign policy during this particular period. We didn't and weren't equipped to go much below the surface and to discuss personalities and that sort of thing. It was pretty much a written record of what had happened in those four years. It was fairly straight forward.

Q: How did you feel about the rise of Brezhnev? With the departure of Khrushchev how did you feel the Soviet Union was turning internally and in dealing with the United States?

MALONE: As I think I told you in our last discussion, at the time Khrushchev was removed there wasn't any visible change. Not only was there no visible change in Moscow with regards to reactions of the ordinary citizens as far as we could tell, there weren't any visible changes at that time in US-Soviet relations. I don't think that in that period, in the latter part of the 1960s, we were aware of serious changes in the Soviet Union going on as the result of the Brezhnev ascension.

Looking backwards and with a greater span of time to look at, you could see a kind of loosening up, and this is all relative, that had begun under Khrushchev was gradually chopped off little by little. Things for the artist in the Soviet Union, for people who wanted to speak a little more freely then was allowed... those things got worse. That was happening and we could see some of the visible signs of it, but I don't think there was much change in US-Soviet relations.

In some ways I think many of us felt that if it were not for the Vietnam War going on, to which the Soviets had to give at least lip service for their allies, the North Vietnamese, that we might have made more progress in reaching agreement on various issues. But it is now clear, if you look at the whole Brezhnev period, that there was a change, at least internally, from Khrushchev days. In the early Brezhnev period before Brezhnev had consolidated his position, there was an effort at economic reform in the Soviet Union which ultimately failed because the Soviets just couldn't take that step. That too, I think, was due mainly to Brezhnev and the people around him who were basically a very conservative lot. I don't mean to suggest that there would have been a radical economic reform by today's standards, but even in its modest form it was very quickly watered down and in the end didn't amount to anything.

Q: Then your last two years, 1969-71, was in the Secretariat?

MALONE: Yes.

Q: What were you doing there?

MALONE: I was in what is called the Operations Center which is a 24 hour operation which endeavors to keep on top of everything happening all over the world as far as the United States is concerned. I was what was called in those days a Department Operations Officer which meant I was in charge of a small team in the Secretariat working shifts either in the day time or at night and monitoring everything that was going on and alerting people whenever anything happened that anyone ought to know about.

That tended to be more exciting at night because we were in effect the Department of State in the middle of the night and if things were happening you had to decide whether to call the Secretary or whether to call some other official. Whether to alert the National Security Council, etc. And there were always things happening. You remember Dean Rusk's famous remark when the Operations Center was first organized which is on his watch that at any given time in the world more than half the population is awake and a lot of them are making trouble.

So there were always things happening. It was an interesting job and certainly one in which you did know everything that was going on in the world as far as US interests were concerned.

Q: Did you get involved more in depth in any particular incident?

MALONE: A lot depended whether you were on duty at the time the thing broke. Some crises, of course, carried on over time. I remember being on duty when the war in Jordan occurred...

Q: This is Black December or something?

MALONE: Yes. ...and having to call people all over the Department and ultimately calling the Secretary of State and briefing him and setting up a task force. In those days, and I

think still, if a crisis is going to persist the Operations Center sets up a task force. There is a special room for these people and at a certain point specialists in the Department who are dealing with that geographic or subject area would go over and man the task force on a 24 hour basis and the people in the Operations Center would sort of step aside and go about their normal business.

Q: It was a great training exercise too as far as knowing who does what, wasn't it?

MALONE: Yes, it was. It was a wonderful exercise in a lot of ways. It was a wonderful exercise in seeing what effective reporting is and what ineffective reporting is. How the ambassador who sends in a ten page message is almost certain not to have it read. Learning that kind of thing for a middle grade Foreign Service officer is extremely useful.

Q: Did you get any feel during that period of time of the relationship between Henry Kissinger, the National Security Adviser, and William Rogers, the Secretary of State, or was that still in the development stages?

MALONE: It is surprising how one can be at the center in the Operations Center as I was and not have a very good feel for that. One of my jobs when I had been on the night shift was to brief the Executive Secretary every morning on whatever hot items had come up during the night. So we all got to know whoever the Executive Secretary was pretty well. Over time it became, I won't say clear, but one certainly had the feeling that there was a problem there. That at least Henry Kissinger in the NSC was playing a very active role. There were hints of things happening over there that the State Department didn't know about.

No, I didn't have a clear feel for that. It may have been a little early too.

Q: It was a developing relationship, if that is the right word.

MALONE: Secretary Rogers was a very nice man to deal with. I always enjoyed dealing with him and I think all his staff did. One of the things that was true in the Operations Center was that even as a middle grade officer you dealt directly with the Secretary of State and all the high officials. We all liked him. He was a very decent man. I remember on a couple of occasions having to call him up on the golf course to report something. Some of the higher officials did not react well to that kind of thing, but he always did.

Q: You left the Department in 1971 and went back to your old stamping grounds of Warsaw where you served from 1971-73.

MALONE: That is right.

Q: What were you doing there?

MALONE: I was Chief of the Political Section of the Embassy there. I worked most of that time for Walter Stoessel. Well, I worked for Walter for a year and then he left and we were without an ambassador for about six months. At that point I became the acting DCM and the DCM became the Charg#. In the last six months of my tour Dick Davies came as ambassador.

Q: What was the political situation at that time as far as the Poles were concerned?

MALONE: Well, Poland was a country that was then and still is very pro-American. Given their own choice, all but the top leaders of Poland, would have been very easy to deal with. But, of course, they were allies of the Soviet Union and could make no step in any direction without considering that fact very seriously. So on important questions they could not act independently. What we were trying to do was to make them as independent as they could be under the circumstances. To treat them not as a lackey of the Soviet Union but as an independent country. To keep emphasizing that and to keep emphasizing to

them that we were aware of the many specific differences between them and the Soviets in the way the country was governed, organized, etc.

On the other hand we were reporting to Washington what was happening in Poland so that the people in Washington would also understand what some of these differences were, because there were profound differences.

Serving in Warsaw in 1971 was not like serving in Moscow in 1965, let us say. You had the same basic structure, it was a totalitarian state, but it was a much looser, much more inefficient totalitarian state. We were, of course, under surveillance by the secret police, but they were much less vigorous in an every day sense then the Soviets were. I don't mean that they weren't learning things about us and watching us, but in terms of intimidating people who you might want to see, there was much less of that.

In that period in Poland I would say the atmosphere was noticeably freer than it had been during my first tour there. I arrived this time six months after Gomulka had been tossed out as Party leader and the man who was running the country. Edward Gierek, his successor, was a different kind of person. Again it is a little hard to believe now looking back on it, but at that time, he was behaving in such a way that a lot of people were really quite hopeful that this was a different kind of Communist leader. That proved wrong in the long run. His style certainly was very different. The country became more open and more interested in dealing with the West. Gierek, himself, had been a coal miner, but he had been a coal miner in a period of his life in Belgium and he spoke French, unlike his predecessors. He was in a sense more cosmopolitan. He could talk to the French leaders in their own language and relished that.

This was a period in which Poland seemed to be trying to turn more to the West. They were getting a lot of farm loans at that time. They were importing more from the West. The standard of living was going up partly as a result of that. People were living better and it

was a time, I would say, of modest hope among the Polish people that things were getting better and their was some hope out there that things would continue to get better.

We now know that those hopes, at least in the fairly short run, were wrong. Gierek, as he stayed in power longer and longer, became more and more corrupt and the economy eventually went on a deep downhill slide which continued for a good many years. But that particular period was one during which we were moderately hopeful.

Q: Were your contacts with the Foreign Ministry fairly open?

MALONE: Contacts were another contrast with the Russians. Contacts in the Soviet Union with the Foreign Ministry were...you always felt you were dealing with an adversary. Whereas in Poland, although officially the Poles did not agree with US foreign policy in some very important areas, you always felt you were communicating whether you were speaking Polish or English. I know that my counterpart understood perfectly well what I was saying. That was different from the Soviet.

You had the feeling with the Soviets in those earlier days that the officials were living in a different kind of world and it was difficult for them to bridge that gap. The Poles were quite different. They did consider themselves a Western people, not an Eastern people. They will tell you that at every opportunity. So dealing with Polish officials was really quite easy. Of course there were policy differences and you knew when they were going to say no. They would even say it apologetically sometimes.

Then, of course, because the country was much more open, we had lots of contacts outside officialdom. We knew a good many journalists and other kinds of people...Had them to my house and had very uninhibited conversations.

Q: Vietnam was still going hot at this time and the Poles had been part of this tripartite neutral observer thing and all that. What was your impression of the Polish role there? Were they really just a cats paw for the Soviets?

MALONE: Partly yes, but they were also in their own way trying to be helpful. I think in the beginning they relished that role because it gave them a little bit of independence and they actually could be intermediaries and would have a role that was acceptable to the Soviets but was different. They, of course, had to toe the Soviet line as far as attitude towards the Vietnam War. Clearly, no Pole had any interest in Vietnam or the war. I never ran into any animosity in Poland because of that. It was in the newspapers but that didn't make any difference.

Q: What about the Nixon policy towards Poland? Was there much interest in Poland?

MALONE: Yes, there was an interest in Poland. Nixon visited Poland in 1972. The interest, again, was to try to make it clear to the Poles that they were a separate, distinct nation and we were going to treat them that way to the extent that they allowed us to. It was a policy that was considered elsewhere in Eastern Europe and I think it was the right policy at the time. Nixon did pay a Presidential visit.

Q: How did that go from your perspective?

MALONE: I think it went well. He didn't stay very long, only a couple of days. He had been in Moscow and was on his way back. The Poles liked it. I am not talking just about the general population, but the Polish leadership. That was fine because if Nixon could go to Moscow, the Soviets couldn't object his coming to Poland. There were agreements signed but nothing momentous.

In terms of atmosphere it was a good thing. Presidential visits are always a tremendous strain on Foreign Service officers who are working in the country when the President visits and this was no exception. They are in many ways very unpleasant experiences because you have to deal with a huge crew of people who know absolutely nothing about foreign affairs and whose only interest is to advance the cause of the President in some political way. I think every Foreign Service officer who has ever had anything to do with any kind

of a Presidential visit will say the same thing. We were told by the veterans at the time that as Presidential parties went, and I am talking about all the advance parties, etc., the Nixon people were better than any in the past. They would say, “You should have seen the Kennedy people.” “You should have seen the Johnson people.” That may be true, I didn't experience a Johnson or Kennedy visit. But these visits are nevertheless in their own way an unpleasant and certainly in some ways a disillusioning experience.

The White House teams would come out and essentially take over. They would sometimes forget that it wasn't their country they were dealing with. Demands on how the President should be handled and the various things that the host government would simply have to do would be by any objective standards considered outrageous. However, the staffs of American Presidents get away with this because the host country wants that visit badly so they are willing to do a lot of things that are really pretty [outrageous].

Q: Did you find that the Polish-American vote was a factor because of Congressional approval or Presidential visits or what have you?

MALONE: I didn't. Obviously the President was thinking about that among other things when he came to Poland. That is the reason a lot of American political figures come on their own. When I served in Poland for the first time in the 1960s, Teddy Kennedy came. Now he was only 29 so he wasn't quite old enough to be senator, but he was being groomed for that, so a trip to Poland was part of it. There were always politicians coming out. I didn't feel in the case of the Presidential visit that the Polish-American vote was particularly a consideration. Remember Henry Kissinger was sort of running that show and he thought strategically and conceptually and that really wasn't part of it. But it certainly was true with individual Members of Congress. They came out even in those days in considerable numbers. The reason, of course, was so that they could go back to the folks in Chicago or Cleveland, or wherever and say, “I was in Poland and I talked to so and so.”

Q: Were there any major issues that came up while you were there?

MALONE: There weren't any major crises in that period. It was, as I said, a period when Poland was trying to open up to the West a little bit and we were trying to help them. The kinds of things that I focused on even more than bilateral relations were internal events because you did have a Communist government which was doing new things. A Party Congress was held in that time and that is always a big event in a Communist country. We spent a lot of time reporting on some things like that.

In retrospect, if you look back after many years, they don't seem very important, but at the time they were big political events and you had to help people in Washington understand them.

Q: Sometimes in doing this it is almost hearsay to say this, both of us being retired Foreign Service officers, but sometimes we do get very much involved in internal politics which we have to report and go into deal on them when you wonder what is in it for us?

MALONE: That is right, but you have to report on these things because they are the things that are going on and it is your job out there to help people to understand whatever it is that is happening. And that is basically what we were trying to do. I think we had a pretty good, fairly integrated country team approach at Warsaw to those things. We worked closely with the Economic Section because a lot of political questions are frequently economic as well. My section also worked very closely with the USIA people who were very well plugged in to Poland and knew a lot about what was going on in the universities, field of journalism, etc.

Q: That brings us to your next assignment which was going to USIA from 1973-75. Was this a normal assignment for a State Department officer to go to USIA?

MALONE: No it wasn't. It had never occurred to me that I would work in USIA, although I think by virtue of the fact I had worked in Soviet Affairs and Eastern European Affairs I had worked quite closely with USIA. Even in Moscow when I was more junior I would

sometimes go on trips with visiting American writers, or something at the request of USIA. So I had had experience working with them earlier. When I was in SOV, actually, part of my portfolio was being the liaison person with USIA. So I was frequently on the phone with the people at Voice of America, or going over to meetings at USIA, etc. So, having had this experience in Poland and having worked very closely with the Public Affairs Officer, the chief of USIS section, when he invited me at the time I was leaving Poland to come over to USIA for a tour, it seemed, although not the usual thing to do, to be a sensible and interesting thing to do. And so I did it.

Q: Did you notice a difference in approach or outlook between USIA and the State Department?

MALONE: Yes. I think the USIA experience produces a somewhat different kind of officer then the State Department produces. They are both more or less the same when they come into the Foreign Service. But there was a surprising identity of views too in the Soviet and Eastern European fields. State and USIA worked together very closely in those days. We conferred all the time. So when I moved into USIA I was simply in a certain sense walking across the hall and assuming a different kind of function.

Yes, there was a difference in outlook. The USIA officer's job is in various ways to publicize the United States, its policies and try to affect the thinking of the people in those countries, whether it be radio, the Voice of America, a magazine, educational exchanges, etc. Naturally people who are constantly involved in that sort of thing think a little differently then someone who has spent his entire career in the State Department. A little less cautious, which I think is probably a good thing. More experienced at organizing things because USIA officers have to do that. They have to organize events and programs, etc. Certainly at the younger level they seemed to be more experienced at these things. Less interested, and this is sort of a negative side, in careful analysis of what is happening in the other country. Mostly not because they weren't intelligent, but because they didn't have time to do that kind of work.

I think one of the reasons I was asked to come into USIA in that job which dealt exclusively with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was that I could bring a kind of different slant to things in a kind of policy sense that maybe some of the others didn't have.

I found it a very enjoyable and interesting experience.

Q: Any major things that you were dealing with during your time there?

MALONE: I can't think of any special events. We were focusing on trying to open up the Soviet Union and the other Eastern European countries to the extent that we could to Western influences.

Q: Did you feel the exchange program was mainly introducing intelligence agents into the United States or were we making some impact with our exchanges?

MALONE: I always felt that we did make an impact and introducing intelligence agents was a price that we paid for that. I thought that when I was in the State Department as well. We were always working to broaden exchanges. One of the vehicles for this was the US-Soviet Cultural and Education Agreement which was normally negotiated every couple of years. So every couple of years we would try to expand all the activities that USIA was engaged in. For example, a greater number of exchange students, a larger circulation for Amerika magazine, etc. I think it is fair to say that throughout the years I was there, this continued. Little by little these things did expand. It was because we all believed that it was a good thing to do.It is a little more difficult to explain why the Soviets were willing. In the beginning I think they overestimated the affect that some of their exhibits and other publications might have. Americans were less impressed then I think perhaps they believed. In most of these negotiations they tended to expand some of those things that they did in the United States and that was from our view a very small price to pay for expanding exchanges and having more freedom to circulate Amerika magazine in the Soviet Union.

Amerika magazine was a tremendously popular magazine. According to the rules that were established in the very first Exchanges Agreement, each side would sell the other's magazine. It was not given away. Amerika magazine sold at the kiosk in Moscow for half a ruble, worth at the official exchange rate of about 65 cents. They were sold out instantly and there was a black market for the magazine, so it commanded up to 4 or 5 rubles a copy. There was a tremendous thirst in the Soviet Union among the citizens for more information about the United States. These were people whom the Soviet Union, after all, had been educating. As you educate people they become more curious about the outside world, and they were very curious. So I felt while I was in USIA that I was doing something quite useful. And it was also a lot of fun.

Q: Did you get involved with Voice of America at all?

MALONE: Yes.

Q: How did you find the politics of VOA, particularly with the Eastern European, former Soviet people? I imagine these are people with intense feelings and sort of their own ax to grind, etc.

MALONE: I think that was always true and therefore running those Services in the Voice of America was always a real managerial challenge for anyone. You had to keep those people on the one hand productive, but on the other hand from being at each other's throats. There was a lot of internal fighting and occasionally trying to say something they shouldn't. I don't think it was a serious problem. They were a very interesting group of people, very individualistic and very motivated. I always felt that the Russian Service and the other Services that were beamed to the Soviet Union were doing a very good job and were well run despite the minor flaps that inevitably arose from time to time.

Q: Then you moved from USIA back to the State Department where you were involved with what...career development?

MALONE: The year after I left USIA I went to the Senior Seminar for a year. Then I became involved in personnel.

Q: What area of personnel were you involved in?

MALONE: I was the Deputy Director of the Office of Foreign Service Assignments and Counseling. We were responsible for assignments for all Foreign Service Officers within the United States and overseas. Career development was part of it. But the main job was to assign the right people to the right place. It is quite a large operation. As I recall we had something over 90 people. It required that many to do that job.

Q: What was the atmosphere at that time? Were there any major problems that you had to deal with?

MALONE: There weren't any major problems except in the sense that personnel and assignments in the State Department is always a problem. We had gone into a period then which was designed to make the assignment system more equitable than it had been in the past. To make it less dependent on the old boy network. To give everyone a better chance than they had had in the past to pick their own assignment.It was never an easy system to manage. I think almost everyone who worked in personnel found it on the one hand satisfying when you could do things for people but on the other hand frustrating because it never works perfectly. People are always dissatisfied. In theory you can assign the right person to the right place and the right time, it really is not that easy to do, especially since it is a Service that is always in motion. People are always leaving and new ones coming in. And never quite enough people, even in those days. So although all of us recognized that in theory more training, a part from language training, was desirable for people, we didn't have quite enough people to manage that. We always envied the military because they always seemed to have so many people that people could take a year off and go to a university or things like that.

Q: Well, essentially they are waiting for a war.

MALONE: Exactly. Whereas we never had enough.

Q: Then you spent a year or so in Management Operations.

MALONE: I spent a little over two years in Management Operations. That again was something I had never considered doing. But I was invited by the then Director of Management Operations, Joan Clark, to come in and be the senior Deputy in that job. In those days, the Director of Management Operations was an Assistant Secretary equivalent, so we operated at a reasonably high level in the bureaucracy.

The job, itself, was in many ways quite interesting, although again frustrating. Our job was in a sense to oversee the whole Department of State in a managerial way and not only to make recommendations about how things could be improved in one section or another, but to help the Under Secretary for Management make basic decisions about who gets how much money.

Needless to say that occupied a great deal of our time. But it was an interesting experience in a managerial sense to be able to look down upon the whole Department of State and see how the organization behaves. One saw some surprising things.

Q: What were some of things that you found? Did you find that power existed in odd places, etc.?

MALONE: What I found was that in a managing sense, this is apart from policy, the Department of State was very much like a group of semi-independent fiefdoms. It was hard to get people to cooperate managerially. Every Assistant Secretary fought for his or her own turf and resources. It is natural that this should have been the case and yet it was the first time I had been able to see it in such a clear cut form.

Some of the things that were surprising were the decisions that the geographic bureaus made when you had to ask them to allocate resources, diminish their resources in a rational way. During the Carter Administration there was a period of budget cutting so we required all the Assistant Secretaries to go through an exercise and tell us what they would cut if we cut them 5 percent, what would they cut if we cut them 10 percent, what would they do if it were 15 percent. Then decisions would be made based on their reports.

We asked this in the geographic bureaus in terms of personnel among other things. If we had to reduce a number of your people where would you cut them? In the major exercise we carried out, only one of the geographic bureau's said they would cut any domestic positions, which was astonishing. In my view we really didn't have enough people overseas and the domestic arm was growing all the time. In this particular exercise I remember very well that every one of them, except the African Bureau, said they would not cut a single domestic position, they would take the cuts from all overseas posts. I felt that not only was this surprising, but it was almost certainly wrong and it reflected a kind of attitude which shouldn't have been there. It was perfectly clear that in many instances overseas we didn't have enough political officers, or this or that. Yet this was where they wanted to cut.

Q: The throne being in Washington they wanted to keep their courtiers around them.

MALONE: That is right. And this is also reflected during all those years, not just the two I was working, in the layering that was taking place. I said earlier that when I was in the European Bureau we had two Deputy Assistant Secretaries. By the time I got into Management Operations, a few years later, there were six. Nothing had really changed a lot in the world during that period, but there were now six Deputy Assistant Secretaries.

Q: Because of the time constraints, let's move to your last assignment which was Deputy Associate Director of USIA. You were there from 1980-84. How did this assignment come about?

MALONE: Again it is an odd assignment. Actually it was my former colleague who had originally invited me to be Deputy Assistant Director of USIA when I went over there the first time who invited me to come in for this job. USIA in the meantime had been reorganized. It consisted of a Director, a Deputy Director and four Associate Directors who were by now Presidential appointees. In those days each of those Associate Directors had a Deputy who was not a Presidential appointee. I was invited to be the Deputy Associate Director for Programs. My colleague was given a Presidential appointment to be the Associate Director.

It was a very interesting job. The Bureau of Programs was the second largest of USIA Bureaus. The largest being the Voice of America. Programs had about 950 people, or something like that in those days. It covered virtually everything that USIA did, except for radio broadcasting and educational and related exchanges. Everything else fell under our Bureau. So it meant a lot of variety and, of course, a lot of managerial work. But I found it extremely interesting.

In USIA, unlike the Department of State, you can see physical things happening as a result of decisions you make. That is kind of nice for a change. You can make a decision and eventually you see a television program produced, a magazine appear, or something else happens. It was fun to do that.

The downside, I suppose, was that it was a chaotic political period. I arrived about three weeks before the election of 1980 at which time Jimmy Carter was defeated and Ronald Reagan was elected. Then on the 20th of January, on Inauguration Day, all the Presidential appointees ceased to be Presidential appointees, so I became Acting Associate Director and oddly enough in the little less then four years I was in that job I was the Acting Associate Director for two years all together. It took the Reagan Administration a long time to make those appointments, so I was running things then. Then the political appointees tended not to stay for very long and then you have another very long gap. This was in a period when there were many in the new Reagan Administration who thought

they were really creating a revolution in government. It was a very ideological period. Obviously that had its affect on USIA too.

The President appointment Charlie Wick who had been a friend of his to come in and run the Agency, which was normal. There were other political appointees brought in who were clearly not Charlie Wick's choices. There were more political appointees in USIA during that period than there had ever been before. At least twice as many. Some of them were indeed pursuing their own agendas. Charlie Wick, himself was a highly energetic man who had had no experience in this kind of thing before and there was a certain amount of chaos that went on along with some of the things he did. So some of what I did was difficult because the situation was chaos.

Q: Did you run across any sort of policy directives that were coming either from Wick or some of these almost private operators that were just so horrendous that you as a professional looking at American policy had to do whatever you could to slow it down?

MALONE: I didn't. But that was probably because of the position I was in. As an Acting or Deputy Associate Director, I was just one step from the top of the Agency, so if I got a directive it was from either Charlie Wick himself, or from my immediate superior when I had an immediate superior. Charlie Wick hadn't had any experience in this field before he came in so people outside used to assume that Charlie Wick was an ideologue. But he wasn't. You had to have thought about these things before to be an ideologue and he hadn't. His major interest was radio and television. Of course I didn't have anything to do with radio. Television was part of my bailiwick initially, and at a certain point, I think rightly, Charlie Wick moved Television to a semi-independent status so he could deal with it directly.

So I never had anything thrust upon me that I felt was wrong or undesirable. But obviously in the course of my work I had to keep an eye on all of these programs that USIA were

carrying out and if they threatened to go too far or do things that probably were unwise, to try to tune it down a little. But that really wasn't a problem.

There was one problem that I had to face during this period. This is the problem of the so-called Blacklist involving speakers that were sent out overseas. The USIA at that point were sending out about 5 or 600 speakers worldwide every year. That was part of my operation. It is a very labor intensive thing to do, to try to find the right speaker to go to the right place and set it all up.

At a certain point early in the Administration, the people at the top of USIA began to realize that some of the speakers going out were not doing exactly what you would have hoped for. What I mean is, early in the Administration when I was sitting there by myself and Charlie Wick hadn't even come aboard yet, we began getting cables in from overseas saying, “Why did you send this Joe Smith? He got off in Japan, or some other place, and attacked the Administration's economic policy, or whatever.” Obviously I had to deal with that because you don't send people overseas to attack the policy of your government. I thought we eventually got that pretty well under control. But it takes a long time to make changes like that.

At a certain point the people in the top of USIA got one of these cables and actually paid attention to it. It came in from Japan, I remember it very well. At that time I was the Deputy, but I had to live with the effects of this. The cable came in from Tokyo saying, “We understand the need to show the diversity of the United States, pluralism, the fact of freedom of speech and all that, still you sent us two speakers last week, both of whom attacked the United States in various ways. We don't understand why you are doing that?” Perfectly reasonable response.

At that point the management of USIA made a very unwise decision. They decided that they would put into effect a clearance process so that everyone who was being considered as a speaker would be floated by them in a list. Now that meant lots of lists because

although 5 or 600 speakers are sent out a year to get that number maybe 3000 would be considered. So lists would be set up and people would x out those people they didn't want.

This system, obviously, lent itself to wrong interpretation and it wasn't very sensible anyway because quite frankly most of the people sitting at the very top of the Agency hadn't heard of any of these people. But over the course of time, they did x out this person or that person who was known to them because of some political reason. And being good bureaucrats the persons who job it was to send out the speakers made lists of these people because they didn't want to put that person on the lists again. And that list over the years grew and reached 85 or 90 people which isn't very many out of 3000 a year.

At a certain point a disgruntled employee informed the press that there was this list and that it was labeled the Blacklist. It caused all kinds of furor. The academic community particularly reacted violently to it. I will say, that although our best speakers were mostly from the academic community and we had a very good relation with them, there were some in the academic community who simply did not understand why the US government shouldn't send anybody out irrespective of whether that person was going to attack US policy or not. I don't think, probably to this day, some of those people understood. They felt it was sort of a right to go out...

Q: We are having some of this in the funding of the arts. In fact they feel there should be more emphasis on the negative rather than the positive.

MALONE: Actually in the speakers program most people didn't go out to speak about foreign policy so it wasn't a problem. Of course people could say what they wanted once they got out there. We didn't send people out we responded to requests from posts. They would say to us that they wanted someone to come out to explain main US foreign policy. We would send such a person and if that person went out and attacked US policy he hadn't done what he was supposed to do. But it was an interesting period.

Q: I realize we are under...

MALONE: I have to leave in about five minutes.

Q: How did you find the influence of the White House? Did they pay much attention to what was happening?

MALONE: Yes, they did. They paid a lot of attention. I think, based on what I know, I would say they paid more attention to what was happening in USIA then any other White House ever had. The Reagan Administration came in with a strong bias towards public diplomacy as something that was good and something that should be used. President Reagan, himself, understood the importance of communication and people around him thought this was an important tool of foreign policy. So, yes, they did pay attention.

At various periods when I was in that job I would go almost every week to a meeting at the National Security Council with certain people on the NSC staff at the White House. We had a lot of contact with them. And they were very supportive. In that sense it was a very good period for USIA.

Q: I have heard people say that Charlie Wick was sort of a loose cannon, but at the same time he got the money for USIA so it really wasn't a bad time for USIA.

MALONE: Exactly. He did get the funds and he did it very successfully. I will say another thing, he understood right away that television was a tremendous media and he built up the Television Service and enabled it to turn in new ways which I think were very important. He understood that. Although Charlie Wick certainly had his faults, people have often exaggerated those faults or haven't fully understood what some of his contributions were. Where Charlie Wick got into trouble early on was with the academic community. That was a very serious problem for him ever after that.

When Charlie first arrived in USIA, OMB (Office of Management and Budget) had somehow not gotten the word that the Reagan Administration really cared about public diplomacy. So you may recall that when Reagan came in he said he was going to cut Jimmy Carter's budget because it is way too high. But because Reagan understood that defense and foreign policy were national security items they were not going to cut those, but everyone else was to be cut and that included USIA. So Charlie Wick was given an instruction that he would cut x percent out of his budget, the budget that was going to be presented to Congress. So he had to find ways to do that. Although he was an outsider, he did what any good bureaucrat would do and said positions had to be preserved since once lost they would never be recovered. So reductions would have to be found elsewhere.

The big pocket of money was in educational exchanges. All that it would mean was that for a certain period of time there would be fewer exchanges. So Charlie said that was where they were going to make some of the big cuts. Other places took cuts too, everyone but the Voice of America.

When Congress heard about that and the academic community heard about it their reaction was almost violent. They said that this was what they had always known about the Reagan Administration, this was exactly what they had always feared. They were cutting this tremendously important thing, academic exchanges. As a result of that (a) Charlie never lived that down and (b) the Congress took it upon itself then to mandate by law that for the next three years, the money allocated to exchanges was to double. So exchanges went up considerably in that period and the rest of us had to sort of cut other things to make up for it. It was an interesting episode.

Q: Well, Giff, I want to thank you very much for this. I really appreciate this.

MALONE: Well, you are very welcome.

Q: It was fun.

End of interview